



FIA Matters!

Family Independence Agency • Lansing, Michigan • February 23, 2005
Produced by FIA Office of Communications, Suite 1510, Grand Tower, Lansing
Submit stories by e-mail to FIA-Newsletter@michigan.gov

2004 Leadership Academy

From Lynn Subramanian
FIA Office of Professional Development
SubramanianL@michigan.gov

Marianne Udow introduced the members of the 2004 Leadership Academy at a meeting in Lansing Dec. 14. In a reception that followed, she addressed the new members and spoke of her commitment to leave a legacy of strong leadership in the department. Both director Udow and chief deputy director Laura Champagne have affirmed their commitment to leadership development by volunteering to be mentors for the 2004 academy.

The Leadership Academy is designed to prepare potential leaders to move into high level positions, as they become available. The academy selects a pool of high potential candidates and accelerates their development to prepare them to fill these top positions.

One hundred and twelve candidates submitted self-nominations for 2004. Following a rigorous selection process FIA Executive Staff, taking into account geographic and organizational diversity, selected the 24 members. The academy has been featured in national publications and has been recognized by the American Society on Training and Development with an award.

The success of Leadership Academy sparked an interest in expanding leadership development opportunities. To obtain department-wide input, FIA Office of Professional Development facilitated a committee with representatives from unions, field staff and management representing all zones, central office, Bureau of Juvenile Justice and Disability Determination Service. Committee recommendations resulted in two outcomes: expansion of eligibility criteria for Leadership Academy and a Leadership Development Program that is open to all staff.

Eligibility criteria for Leadership Academy was expanded to include P-11 and 12 level staff in addition to 13 level and above and managers at any level who were eligible in the past. The new criteria are in keeping with the purpose of the academy but allow for inclusion of many additional staff. The expanded criteria will be used for the next Leadership Academy selection process that will begin in spring 2005.

The new Leadership Development Program is an alternative to the Leadership Academy and will be open to all staff. The program will have two purposes – to develop leadership skills for all staff and to prepare staff to move into supervisory positions. Online learning will be used to reduce travel and allow participants to learn when convenient. Managers will be trained as mentors who can facilitate developmental experiences locally. The program is currently under development and more information will be forthcoming over the next few months.

Congratulations and welcome to Leadership Academy 2004 members. We look forward to the next two years filled with excitement, learning and growth.

Today's big story



2004 Leadership Academy members standing l-r: Leonard Richards, Howard Anthony, Edward Brickner, Dawn Rodriguez, James Cochrane, Kimberly Ann Hahn, Gary Aschim, Gregory Hill, Mary Lou Mahoney, Linda Riffenburg, David Russell, Renee Adorjan, Wendy Campau, John Seeterlin, Mary Hall-Thiam, Brenda Edwards, Tracie Kress, Vicki Dahl, Sandra Bistoff. Seated l-r: Cynthia Chapman, Holly Roderick, and Brenda Will. Not pictured: Kelly Morse and Antoinette Prabucki.

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FIA connection to NFL?

From Shelly J. Marner
Midland County FIA, Midland
MarnerS@michigan.gov

Kevin Myers, the son of Midland-Gladwin FIA licensing worker **Gezelle Myers**, recently played in the Cactus Bowl at Kingsville, Tex. as a linebacker for the East squad. The Cactus Bowl showcases top NCAA Division II players in a game attended by scouts from every NFL team in preparation for the NFL Draft in April. Players are selected to participate from colleges across the country. Kevin was one of the East's leading tacklers for the game, where the East prevailed, 19-15.



Kevin Myers in his Cactus Bowl jersey with girlfriend Amanda Beehr.

Kevin is a senior at Ferris State University in Big Rapids majoring in plastics engineering. Twice he has been named all-American and was FSU defensive rookie of the year in 2001. In 2003 he was first in the nation in number of total tackles. He is the fifth leading tackler in the history of Ferris State football, finishing with 435 tackles in his college career. Kevin has been contacted by pro football representatives and looks forward to continuing his football career through the NFL or Canadian Football League.

Earned Income Tax Credit

The Earned Income Tax Credit is one of the largest anti-poverty programs. Families with earnings in the \$10,000-\$15,000 range may qualify for a credit of up to \$4,000. Free tax-preparation sites across the state will assist taxpayers who are eligible for EITC. Individuals can call 1-800-865-8683 to get information about sites in their area. This number will connect you to a local volunteer center that will give you information about free tax preparation services. For more information about EITC or to find local free tax service go to www.michiganeic.org

Oakland County holiday giving

From Margaret Warner, Director
Oakland County FIA, Bloomfield Hills
WarnerM4@michigan.gov

The holidays were a special time of giving in Oakland County. FIA and its community partners collaborated in fund raising, gift collection and holiday events for local needy children and families.

Each year the Oakland FIA District IV office in Pontiac helps with gifts for children and developmentally-delayed adults and their families. This year they were able to help 181 people from 70 families. **Pam Mack**, an eligibility specialist at District IV, coordinated this effort.

The administrative managers and supervisors adopted the Grovecrest Home for the Aged for the holidays. The home houses over 50 people, most of whom are on public assistance. Staff purchased a DVD player and DVDs, toiletries, scarves, mittens, hats and other personal items. Staff also put together two large fruit baskets, baked cookies and bought candy. Not only did they deliver the items along with a card for each resident but sang holiday songs to all assembled!

The District V Foster Care staff hosted their second annual party for foster children and their foster parents. This year's party was a great success. The children made crafts, got a visit from Santa (from District IV), ate plenty of food and each received a gift. **Deborah Frye**, foster home licensing supervisor and staff members **Kathleen Banfield**, **Portia Garland** and **Selika Johnson** coordinated this event. Of course, the party would not have been possible without the donations of money and time from many district staff members. I participated in these activities and I appreciate everyone's hard work.

Additionally, staff from another community partner selected our foster care children and youth to benefit from their gift giving this year. Collectively, they purchased personalized gifts for well over 100 children!

A number of other families also benefited from the FIA Community Giving Program. The program provided food, clothing and gifts from individuals, churches, community agencies and corporations. Many families in Oakland County would not have had any Christmas without their generous donations.

A special thanks also goes to Baker College Work Study Program students, **Kathy Kennedy**, **LaToya Clabon**, **Roshanda Rowell** and **Jessica Beste**. Each of them was instrumental in coordinating activities from soliciting donations, matching children and families to sponsors, picking up and delivering gifts and food and helping put together the holiday party for foster children. We are very grateful to all who donated their time, gifts, money and food. The holidays were a little brighter for numerous children and families in need in Oakland County.

Cheboygan and Mackinac FIA team up to make a difference

From Crystal Lee Briley

Cheboygan County FIA, Cheboygan

BrileyC@michigan.gov

After receiving a message from Governor Granholm regarding supporting our troops, Cheboygan and Mackinac County FIA staff were inspired to do something. The two counties, which comprise a dual county FIA district, put together plans for a fundraising event, with the proceeds going to our soldiers overseas.

Staff members brought in donated items to be sold at a silent auction. Sale items included homemade crafts, baked goods and things no longer wanted by the owner. Old treasures became new treasures to those willing to bid. **Deb Brcic** provided the decorations for the project setup display in the Cheboygan office. She did a great job!

The flurry of bidding lasted three days across the Straits of Mackinac and on the final day the items went to the highest bidder. Together, we raised \$141.60 and used it to purchase 30 calling cards for our troops.



Cheboygan group with phone cards for troops acquired through the fundraiser (l-r): **Vince Tricoci**, adult services; **Julie Waldron**, community resource coordinator; **Pat Stoner**, children's protective services; **Gloria Stempky**, receptionist; **Dana Stempky**, CPS; **Ken DesArmo**, Cheboygan-Mackinac county director; and **Gretchen Lees**, eligibility specialist.



Mackinac group with phone cards (l-r) **Regina Frazier**, CPS; **Ronda Engle**, Indian Outreach Worker; **Julie Clark**, family independence specialist; **Sheri Royer**, CPS & adult services; and **Cheryl Stearns**, receptionist.

"One way we can show our gratitude," the governor said in her message to state employees, "is by helping our deployed troops and their family members stay in touch." She said Michigan Department of Military Affairs is collecting and distributing telephone calling cards to our troops and their families. Thanks to the governor for the idea and thanks to Cheboygan and Mackinac staff for participating in supporting our troops!

The project was a fun event that cost only a little time but resulted in a very meaningful experience. Calling cards will still be welcomed and appreciated! According to Sandra Mahoney at Military Affairs, there have been 2,287 cards donated and shipped to deployed soldier's families since collection started in November 2004.

A program that works

That was the headline in the Feb. 2 issue of The Herald-Palladium, Berrien County's largest circulation newspaper, when they discussed a new Family Resource Center in Benton Harbor. The headline took those words from FIA director Marianne Udow, who gave an address during the Feb. 1 event.

"When this was introduced in 2003 it was supposed to be a pilot program," Udow said. "This has moved well beyond pilot. This is a program that works." There are 39 Family Resource Centers in Michigan located in and near community schools.

■ For more information on Family Resource Centers go online to www.michigan.gov/fia, click on "Individual & Family Services, Special Services, Family Resource Centers."



Joyce Rudkowski (left) and Linnie Wade are Berrien FIA employees working in Family Resource Centers.

Linnie Wade photo from The Herald-Palladium

Saginaw FIA director named top local child advocate

Saginaw County FIA director **Randy Barst** has been selected 2005 Child Advocate of the Year by the Child Abuse and Neglect Council of Saginaw County.



Randy Barst
CAN Council
Newsletter photo

Barst, who was named Saginaw County FIA director on Nov. 22, will receive the award during the organization's fundraising event Feb. 25 in Saginaw.

"(Barst) has dedicated over 20 years to the protection of children and truly believes that we must 'join together to protect our children,'" said the February 2005 CAN Council Newsletter. "Please join the CAN Council in congratulating Mr. Randy Barst as our 2005 Child Advocate of the Year!"

Congratulations, Randy!

Date: Feb. 4
To: Doug McCombs, Director
Alpena County FIA
Subj: Beverly Taylor

I am writing to express my disappointment in the loss of the services of Beverly Taylor as a children's services worker. I think it is important that you know of the quality work that was performed by Ms. Taylor. In many instances she went well beyond what would be expected to service her clients. Her dedication and attention to detail was a true example of a compassionate and concerned employee.

The staff of the Turning Point Program frequently commented on the "tough love" approach that Bev took towards the task of trying to redirect a youthful offender. Her efforts greatly enhanced the success of our program, and her positive approach and smiling face will be sorely missed. Please enter this letter into her personnel file as a very positive entry, and pass along our heartfelt thanks for a job well done.

Daniel J. Tibbals, Director

Turning Point, Alpena

■ Beverly Taylor was in an unfunded position in Alpena County and recently took a family independence specialist position in Presque Isle County. "From the beginning Bev has done a wonderful job with youths and families in both foster care and juvenile justice," McCombs said. "It will not take long to become known in Presque Isle County for her positive approach and for the quality of her work." McCombs described Turning Point as "an alternative school in Alpena."

Your letters,
intercepted
and otherwise

Wayne County FIA author cited for exemplary work

A Wayne County FIA employee and co-author has been cited for acclaim for a new book. Al Ward, a department manager in the Wayne County Zone 10 office, was one of three authors for the book, "A Different Image: The Legacy of Broadside Press, An Anthology", which has been selected for inclusion on the 2005 list of Michigan Notable Books by the Library of Michigan.



"The book (left) was published as a collaboration of Broadside Press and University of Detroit-Mercy Press," Ward said. "I am one of three editors of the publication that contains the work of six outstanding American poets (that) were published during the 1960s civil rights, black power and black arts movements." Broadside Press was founded in Detroit in 1965, Ward said. "Broadside is a renowned small press publisher of African American writers for 40 years. I was published by Broadside in 1990."

The book was supported by grants, he said.

"All the work, research and writing for this project was voluntary. The poets featured or their estate managers provided permissions and photographic materials at minimum or for no compensation. Any profits will go to the Dudley Randall Center for Print Culture at the University of Detroit-Mercy and Broadside Press to publish the next generation of Broadside poets.

"The writers donated their time and contributions to this book as tribute to Dudley Randall, Detroit's first poet laureate and founder of Broadside Press

"The recognition of this book as a notable book of 2004 is quite remarkable for all of us and we thank the Library of Michigan. It was truly unexpected but one that does honor to Dudley's legacy, the work of the press over four decades, and the art and passion of almost 100 published writers."

The Library of Michigan will host a Michigan author event on April 30 and has invited Ward and all 2005 Michigan Notable Books authors to participate in individual author sessions that day. "We are also excited about a new component to the 2005 Michigan Notable Books program that will help us reach the people of Michigan," said Kris Rzepczynski, Michigan genealogy coordinator for the Library of Michigan.

For more on the book go online to <http://wsupress.wayne.edu/index2.htm>

FIA Matters! is a product of Michigan's Family Independence Agency
Marianne Udow, Director Karen Stock, Director, Office of Communications
Larry VanDeSande, editor Submit stories by e-mail to: FIA-Newsletter@michigan.gov